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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to interest and motivate students to participate in social studies, an area in which lack of motivation has caused many elementary students to do poorly. An active learning, cooperative, and collaborative approach to social studies was taken with a class of 30 fourth graders. Through cooperative learning, simulated touring, thematic units, technology, and online communication, students became interested in social studies to the point that social studies became their favorite activity during "free time." Online experiences were provided through the National Geographic Society Kids Network project "What Are We Eating?" in which 12 schools located throughout the United States worked cooperatively. Analysis of the data revealed that the goals set forth for the practicum were met. Not only did the students become interested in social studies, but the new attitudes and participation were reflected in improved report card scores. Cooperative grouping and learning were essential elements of the approach. Appendix A lists 15 curriculum resources, and Appendix B gives telephone numbers for state instructional plans. (Contains 5 tables and 49 references.) (Author/SLD)

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ED 389 270

INCREASING SOCIAL AWARENESS AND GEOGRAPHICAL SKILLS OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS WITH TECHNOLOGY, ON-LINE COMMUNICATIONS, AND COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

by

Dorothy T. Parr

Cluster 58

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Joy Hooper

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Principal,

Winder, Georgia

June 27, 1995

This practicum report was submitted by Dorothy T. Parr under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

1 September 1995
Date of Final Approval of Report

Roberta Wong Bouverat
Roberta Wong Bouverat, Ph.D.
Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Social Awareness and Geographical Skills of Fourth Grade Students with Technology, On-Line Communications, and Cooperative Activities. Parr, Dorothy T., 1995; Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Social Studies/ Geographical Skills/Multi-Media/ Telecommunications/ Cooperative Activities/Fourth Grade.

This practicum was designed to interest and motivate students to participate in social studies. Lack of participation has caused many students to do poorly academically.

An active learning, cooperative and collaborative approach to social studies was chosen. Through cooperative learning, touring, thematic units, technology, and on-line communication, students became interested in social studies. Social studies became the students' favorite activity during "free time".

Analysis of the data revealed that the goals set forth for this practicum were met. Not only did the students become interested in social studies, but with the new attitude and participation, academic achievement was visible through the report card scores.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The school in this practicum is located outside the city limits of a small rural town in the southeastern United States. The school is the largest of seven elementary schools in the county. Grades taught begin with kindergarten and continue through 5th. The population of the school is approximately 620 students.

The socioeconomic base of the population is varied from professional upper middle income to low income, both parents working, single parent families, and those on assistance. The majority of families fall into the low income range; some are transients.

This school is located in the country surrounded by pastures filled with cattle. Rural life still reigns in the area, along with pride, which spills over into the school itself. The saying "poor but proud" aptly describes the families of this community.

There are 43 teachers in the school. The

kindergarten and first grades each are served by one teacher and a paraprofessional. Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5 each are served by one teacher. For those students identified "at risk" in kindergarten, grades 1, 2, and 3, SIA, special instructional assistants, work with children in small groups. One teacher is assigned for each grade level served. In the upper grades, 4 and 5, Chapter I teachers remediate students in reading and math. Three special education teachers provide instruction for all grades to the children diagnosed with handicaps. Computer skills, music, band, physical education and gifted classes are taught by certificated teachers.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The class contains 30 students with an age range from 9 to 11 years. The class is grade 4, but the abilities range from beginning second to the fourth grade level.

The writer has taught in early childhood classrooms for the past 14 years. From 1985-1995, the writer has taught fourth grade, and served as grade chair for three. Over the years, the writer's classes have contained 28-33 children with all classes containing combinations of students mildly, behavior, and learning

disabled interspersed with slow-learning and regular students. Speech deficit and legally blind students have also been included in some of the classes. In such diversified classes, accommodation for the needs of the individual child must be made. The writer served on many committees at the school and the county levels dealing with proposed modifications, book selections, writing curriculum, SST's, student support teams, and attended workshops available within the school district. Certification held at the present time includes both master and specialist degrees in early childhood, K-4, and middle school education, 4-8. The specialized training plus the experience at this level enabled the writer to recognize when children were experiencing difficulty.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The majority of the students in fourth grade were disinterested in social studies. Twenty-five of the 30 students were identified as not liking social studies. Many of the aforementioned students did not do class or homework assignments. The lack of participation reflected on the students' report cards in the form of C's and F's while in the third grade.

Non-participation in class triggered teacher intervention; however, this resulted in a power struggle many times between a determined and rebellious student and the teacher. These altercations resulted in loss of instructional time to other students.

The problem appeared again as homework assignments were made. The disinterested students did not do the work. Upon notification, the parents were receptive; however, the children always claimed to have no homework when the parents asked.

The children often were unable to read or answer a question due to not paying attention. Many tried to write notes, draw, or disturb others who were participating. This behavior required constant vigilance of the teacher. These students were not interested in social studies.

Problem Documentation

Third grade teachers were concerned with the lack of interest in social studies exhibited by the subject students last year. The teachers reported to the writer of time spent trying to monitor the class to keep on task. Third grade teachers also reported an attempt made to get the children to do work in social studies during break rather than playing. Punitive action did not work. Disinterest and lack of participation did not occur as frequently in other subjects as it did in social studies. To assess what was happening, a questionnaire was given the students regarding social studies. The data revealed:

1. Twenty-five students identified social studies as being the least favorite class.
2. Five students identified social studies as being the favorite class.

3. Ten students identified reading and 15 students stated math as favorite content areas.
4. Three students rated reading and two students circled math as least favorite classes.

Table 1

Favorite Class

Students	Reading	Social Studies	Math
30	10	5	15

Table 2

Least Favorite Class

Students	Reading	Social Studies	Math
30	3	25	2

A review of grades earned during the third grade indicated that 20 C's and F's were given in Social Studies; 10 were given in other content areas. Comments were made on the report cards to the effect that the lowered grades were due to work not being completed.

Student disinterest in social studies was not a new problem for teachers at the third and fourth grade levels. From 1985 through 1995, the writer

encountered the same difficulty as is present today. All fourth grade teachers in the school estimate one-half of students in social studies classes failed to participate or complete assignments consistently.

Causative Analysis

The ingredients that make up and sustain the problem of disinterest in social studies may vary and differ for each child. Upon close examination of the problem within the school framework, six possibilities appear.

The lecture and discussion type of instruction is a popular forum among social studies eduators. When a lesson is presented by the teacher, the children are unable to participate and lose interest. Following the lecture, when discussion time occurs, many of the students cannot join in due to not listening.

The classroom environment is restrictive and not conducive to group activities. The children sit at desks and listen, or read the text, and answer questions over the material read. Seldom do the students leave the desks.

The instructional plans for teaching social studies are within the teacher's domain. Students are not included or given choices in planning instructional

activities so they do not feel ownership. Many students moan and groan when asked to take out social studies textbooks for class.

The children complain during social studies about not being able to do fun activities as are done in other subjects. As the children do map skills, which require the maps be spread on the floor, smiles appear upon the faces of all. The lack of active participation during instruction diminishes enjoyment.

Many students have never traveled beyond the state of residence, so relating to places unseen or unknown is of little interest. Three children in the class were born in other states. Only ten students have been outside of the state of birth. Interest is generated when someone within the class acknowledges being from another part of the country.

The class became interested in England after reading Mary Poppins. However, when the children tried to find additional material other than a map, the library was unable to help them. Students became discouraged and frustrated when questions went unanswered.

A major handicap is a teaching schedule that all teachers within the county are asked to uphold. The

social studies units are to be taught within the same time frame throughout the school district to ensure uniformity should a student move.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Teachers throughout the country have students with minimal interest levels both in social studies and geography. Dance (1986) found that social studies is one of the least-liked subjects in elementary education. Harden (1991) stated that many students rate social studies as not being a favorite class. This was especially true of adolescent boys. Even teachers as children felt history and goegraphy were the most boring subjects in school, according to Novelli (1993a).

A study was conducted by Crawley (1988) in which students' opinions regarding social studies were compared with reading at grades 3, 5, and 7 respectively. The study revealed that the students preferred reading and that negative attitudes toward social studies increased as the child grew older.

Knight & Waxman (1990) conducted a study of 157 sixth grade students to see if the classroom environment had a relationship with student motivation. The study revealed that the specific variable was student

satisfaction that significantly effected three motivational constructs (academic motivation, academic self-control, and social self-concept).

Teachers expect children to learn about the world around them, develop multicultural awareness, and learn map and globe skills through social studies. However, skills related to other areas of the curriculum can be powerfully taught through social studies. Klenow (1992) pointed to research, thinking, decision-making, interpersonal, and reading skills specifically.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum.

Goals and Expectations

The goals are to interest and motivate students to participate in social studies. Hopefully interested and motivated students will complete class and homework assignments. With completion of work, academic achievement should be realized.

Expected Outcomes

1. Four out of five students will complete homework and class assignments each week.
2. The completion of home and class assignments will be reflected through fewer C's and F's on the report cards each six weeks. The number of C's and F's will be no greater in social studies than are given in any other content area during the 4th grade.
3. One-half of the students will respond

favorably that they like social studies.

Measurement of Outcomes

1. A weekly check chart will be kept by the teacher to record the disposition of assignments given.
2. The teacher will log student report card grades in social studies for comparison with grades earned in other areas.
3. A Social Studies Questionnaire will be given to students to assess feelings about social studies.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The majority of students in the writer's class do not like social studies and feel that it is boring and not worth doing. Realizing that social studies is not always an interesting subject to children, the writer searched to find techniques to evoke interest. One such method involved the use of genealogy as suggested by Aaron (1992). The child involves family, self, and others locally by asking questions, examining documents, and interviewing family members. This results in a show and tell project.

Volpe (1993) recommended cemeteries for research to add local interest. Topics suggested were looking for ethnic groups, comparing longevity of life within time parameters, and identifying veterans.

Philbin & Myers (1991) felt that drama is ideally suited for social studies as it allows students to conceptualize universal and ethical concepts through

concrete experiences. Problem solving and critical thinking can be taught as children role play in an attempt to express alternate attitudes or viewpoints regarding historical, cultural, or sociopolitical events. Sabato (1990) also espoused the use of drama, but said other mediums are great motivators in exploring epoches in time, namely, real artifacts, museum replicas, student-created reproductions, video and computer software.

Mattingly & VanSickle (1991) stated that cooperative learning techniques show superior effects with student time on task, motivation, attendance, attitude toward school, and friendship among peers. The 1991 study documented the results of well-planned cooperative learning techniques that were applied to social studies to increase student achievement. Cooperative learning empowers students, makes for a more democratic classroom, and complements inquiry into global issues according to Windrim (1990). Cooperative learning engenders heterogeneous grouping which Novelli (1993a) felt is most advantageous for children in social studies.

With the information age upon education and the children's love of video games, Levesque (1989)

maintained that the computer is an ideal way to motivate, empower, and increase literacy in students. Computer programs such as "The Oregon Trail" set the framework for children to do creating thinking, planning, and reasoning in social studies. Through the use of technology and imaginations, teachers are able to take students on exciting journeys of learning (Morden, 1994). These trips can be anywhere in the world through the use of telecommunications. Teachers can actually develop an authentic curriculum containing the same information as in the textbook but in a more engaging way for the students. Hancock & Betts (1994) felt that through telecommunications, students can take advantage of learning opportunities not available at the school otherwise. Another option for the use of telecommunication is FrEdMail. Novelli (1993b) felt that FrEdMail is an excellent piece of communication software for children as it features a project monthly in which they may participate with students throughout the USA or internationally. Willett-Smith (1993) published the results of a study using on-line discussions as a motivational device. The study revealed motivation and writing skills were increased substantially.

A plane flight to another country can be made to generate interest and participation (Beach, 1991). This requires cooperative decision making, planning, and building the set, making passports, and learning about the country to be visited.

Beach, Hinojosa, & Tedford (1991) proposed a multicultural geography unit on holidays as a means of increasing the childrens' knowledge and understanding of the cultures and lifestyles of others living throughout the world. Specific countries and holidays are identified, but the unit could be modified to suit the needs and desire of the students. A different approach to multiculturalism is offered by Schram, (1992). Children need face-to-face contact with people from different cultures. Through student interaction with a guest from another part of the world, the students begin to develop global awareness.

As children travel, be it via the text, computer, or trade books, compiling a travel diary makes social studies more interesting and compelling (Blagojevic, 1991). Schilder (1994) also suggested the use of a travel log to record information gleaned as each student goes on tour. The social studies teacher became a tour director and gave the children activities to fulfill as

they traveled through the various states. The activities were completed and the students recorded travel information in the travel logs.

Hornstein (1990) interviewed fifth and sixth grade students and found that in social studies the instruction relies heavily on textbooks which results in half the students disliking the class. As a remedy, approaches should be based on students' preference for active learning. Macnitt (1988) believed that movement activities can be successfully implemented into the classroom and have a motivational impact upon the learning process. One way is through the use of a scavenger hunt (McMahon & Strubbe, 1988). The hunt instills community cooperation and pride. Another way is through the use of games, Mozer (1989). Mappits, Geography Trivia, and Geography Baseball are games to help students learn place location using classroom maps and atlases. These games lend themselves to either team or individual participation.

Linn (1990) felt strongly that a whole-language approach can bring social studies to life for the students. Instead of teaching the subject in an isolated manner, webbing should be done to show an interrelationship with other areas of the curriculum.

Social studies teachers can enliven and bring

history to life by allowing children to personalize the lives of people being studied. The students can accomplish this by comparing the lives of the people being studied with their own lives. The students can analyze texts, recount personal stories as part of history, read picture books, and finally begin to see that reality is often shaped by writers (Bat-Ami, 1990). Another way to achieve personalization is through the use of historical novels. Smith & Dobson (1993) suggested weaving specific information about individuals, time periods, and/or particular places into the social studies curriculum to add more depth and definition.

For students who have a low motivational level, Guenther (1983) offered comic strip activity sheets. Fifty activity sheets for use with the newspaper are designed to focus on one objective stated in question form relating to human behavior or current events.

Current wanted posters can be used as powerful motivators to geographic inquiry. Students can focus on place of birth, locations of criminal activity, where warrants were issued, and other information contained on the poster. Both local and national posters can be used to develop state map skills and

local geography and continental place knowledge and map skills. Crime and tragedy have spatial dimensions. Students can develop a geographic way of thinking by seeking patterns across both time and space (Allen & Molina, 1994). Harden (1991) is another advocate for using murder and mayhem to teach social studies. Focusing on key anti-social acts or events in history and then broadening the scope to address concepts of today is a way of bringing relevance to the topic being studied.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

An active learning, cooperative and collaborative approach to social studies that involved all of the students was chosen for this class. The writer implemented a cooperative learning environment to foster collaborative projects. Active participatory tasks, projects, and activities were designed to integrate with the curriculum. The students moved at their own pace and interest. The children were given choices of the assignments relating to topics being covered.

Thematic units and research provided interest to many students. The social studies curriculum was redesigned into thematic units with many opportunities for research included in the tasks from which the

children chose.

Technology and on-line communication were ways to open the childrens' minds to global awareness. Through computer software, research was conducted, comparisons were made, similarities found, graphing and writing skills were employed. With an on-line communication package, the students were able to contact peers throughout the USA. Unanswered questions the students had about areas of study or cultures were addressed directly. Technology did help each student gain additional awareness both globally and multiculturally as they found many multicultural students on-line in other schools within the United States.

Report of Action Taken

The writer redesigned the social studies curriculum to teach the concepts in five basic units: skills, multicultural, history, tour travel, and telecommunications. The units were not taught in isolation, but were integrated as the material related and permitted.

Skills Unit

Cooperative grouping was established within the first two weeks of the school year. The children were grouped heterogenously into six groups: 2 with 5

children; and 4 with 4 children. During the first two weeks, a map skills unit was introduced. The students worked collaboratively as they learned how to read and use road maps to locate cities, waterways, and landforms, to use the grid, legend and map rose, and to calculate mileage. The students learned to use and make comparisons using elevation, natural resource, population, and topographical maps. These skills were prerequisite for the children before touring through the use of maps and atlases. The skills gained in this unit became the cornerstone for the following units.

Multicultural Unit

A multicultural unit followed next and was presented through books, parents, video, research, maps, and the computer. A multicultural folder was kept that contained a passport, maps with related information, and a recipe representative of each country studied. At the end of this unit, all materials assembled in the multicultural folder were bound into a booklet, Class on Tour Around the World. The recipes were included in a cookbook that will be described and explained in another unit.

The countries chosen and toured were: Brazil,

Cambodia, Germany, Great Britian, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, and Spain. As the children studied each country, they were responsible for locating and labeling major cities on the map of that country, coloring the flag, identifying the type of government, religion, language, and become familiar with some facts regarding the culture and foods. This was done through handouts taken from The Olympic Spirit: A Worldwide Connection, maps, atlases, tradebooks, interviews, and computer software, namely Encarta and MacGlobe (Appendix A). As a culminating activity for each study, the children sampled food and/or did a cultural activity.

The students kept a visual record of travel through the use of passports and a class bulletin board. A world map was mounted and each country visited by the class was flagged, and pictures taken of class activities relating to that country were also mounted.

Specific activities in addition to the aforementioned are listed below under each country. Also included is the specific food sampled for each country studied.

1. Brazil
   a. This country was chosen by the class for Olympic Day proceedings so each child made a miniature flag to carry.
   b. A large flag and banner were made.
   c. Amazon rainforest study.
   d. Brazilian bananas.

2. Cambodia
   a. Cambodian guest brought garments, tablecloths, jewelry used in weddings, and pictures of wedding.
   b. Buddhist religion explained.
   c. Chinese New Year video containing Chinese songs dances and parade was viewed.
   d. Chinese books and dictionary examined.
   e. Cambodian Fried Rice.

3. Germany
   a. Guest speaker discussed culture and holidays; shared pictures of the country.
   b. Parent sent in slides of Germany.
   c. Kartoffelpuffer (potato pancake).

4. Great Britian
   a. Guest showed slides and talked about cultural differences.
   b. Integrated into reading as a thematic unit.
   c. A formal tea party was held.
   d. Viewed the movie Mary Poppins.

5. Israel
   a. Integrated as a thematic unit with reading.
   b. Made a menorah, and participated in the holiday by lighting a candle each day.
   c. Made and played the game dreidel.
   d. Potato latkes.

6. Italy
   a. La Befana, a witch gift giver instead of Santa, was made to represent the Italian Christmas culture.

6. Kenya
   a. Couscous.

7. Mexico
   a. A posida was held in accordance with Christmas

culture.

8. Russia
   a. Fried Cauliflower.

9. Spain
   a. A presidio and a guitar ornament were made to represent Spain's culture during the Christmas holiday.
   b. Gazpacho Andaluce.

10. South Africa
   a. Kwanzaa. The children learned the significance of Kwanzaa and were surprised that the celebration originated in the U.S. and is now celebrated globally.

10. Tanzania
   a. Rehema's Journey. The multicultural unit was introduced with this book as lands near and far. The culture differences within this country was astounding. The different types of homes and lifestyles were beautifully illustrated.

During the Christmas season, the students became interested in how each country celebrated, if Santa was recognized, and if not, was there a gift bearer. The students enjoyed researching and learning the seasonal culture of each country and participated in several, namely, Israel, Mexico, Italy, and Spain. The cultural art activities were found in Ethnic Celebrations Around the World.

History Unit

As the students studied other cultures, immigration was introduced. The students were given a handout of the Ellis Island processing facility taken from Encarta.

The writer read excerpts from the Immigrant Kids and Reborn in America to enable the children to visualize life as it was for immigrants coming into this country long ago as opposed to life as an immigrant today. A guest speaker from Portugal discussed life as the son of an immigrant, shared family pictures, and hardships the family endured in the early 1900's. The children were taught that all Americans, with the exception of the American Indian, are descendants of immigrants.

As a follow-up, each student was given a family tree handout. The child was asked to take the tree home for completion as far backwards as possible, preferably to 1900. Completing the family tree activity taught each student about ancestors or family members who were immigrants. Many of the children reported facts and stories of ancestors and family members as the research, family trees, and histories were shared with classmates. Both the tree and family history were put into the multicultural travel folder to be bound later.

The students logged in facts journals the hardships immigrants endured during the settling of this country in the 1800's and early 1900's, and compared findings to life today as an immigrant.

Tour Travel

The writer divided the states into five regions: Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and West. Each student was asked to purchase a spiral bound notebook to be used as a travel log. All information gathered regarding each state was recorded in the log.

The Southeast was the first region toured. The students were given four assignments:

1. Choose three cities and name one major fact or attraction of each city.
2. Identify the major highways between the cities.
3. Locate waterways or landforms in the area.
4. Draw and color the state flag.

Optional choices were given to students needing additional enrichment. The children were asked to plot the mileage between the cities chosen. Hotels and restaurants were to be designated along the way in which the children would like to patronize. All of the optional activities were carried out during the first tour by the children, and some students continued to do so throughout all the tours. The children used all free time available to do these activities. Many students stated that the activities were fun to do.

Upon completion of the assignments, each region was

shared state by state. Two or three students volunteered to report findings. All of the facts and information gleaned by the students were listed on the board as each state was presented. Facts of interest not already discovered by the other students could be copied into travel logs as desired. All students anxiously awaited a chance to participate and share what had been found.

The research material was gathered by the writer. The writer called each state information office and asked for information packages, Appendix B. Each included a map of the state along with attractions, accommodations, and points of interest. A bookcase containing the editions of Conde' Nast Traveler and Travel Holiday for the past five years was set up in the classroom as an additional resource. Software programs that were available on the CD-ROM included Encarta, MacGlobe, Time Traveler, and MacUSA. Hotel directories from Best Western, Days Inn, Holiday Inn, and others were obtained for research purposes. (See Appendix A)

Georgia was the first state toured in the southeast as it was the students' home state. In addition to the original assignment, each student made a clay relief map of the state to reinforce the landforms viewed from an

overhead presentation. A mobile was also constructed using the state flag, bird, tree, flower and seal. A Georgia gameboard was colored and assembled as a visual aid to mastery of facts about the state.

As Georgia suffered a major flood in 1994 due to excessive rainfall causing a major river to flood, the class spent time researching and learning of the Mississippi, Amazon, Nile, Chang, and Ob rivers. Comparisons were made regarding the size of the rivers, and the amount of damage each would cause should they flood.

During the Southeast tour, each child toured individually and at his/her own speed. The writer realized that this method would be too time consuming and revised the approach.

During the subsequent tours, the writer employed the jig saw approach by allowing each cooperative group to choose a state state within the region to research. The group worked cooperatively together both to research and present the information found. As one group presented, the five remaining groups listened, looked at the information presented on the board, and chose the facts and material of interest to log into their travel books. This moved more smoothly and the children seemed to

really enjoy this method better.

As specific landforms such as deserts, plains, and mountain ranges were identified in travel, the class would locate other major deserts, plains, and mountain ranges throughout the world and compare them with those within the USA. Lifestyles and resources would also be compared. This was another activity the children stated was enjoyable.

As a reinforcing activity, the writer used activity sheets from The 50 States. The sheets presented each state visually on a small U.S. map along with several major facts plus an activity such as a maze, crossword puzzle, math, fill in the blank, or art activity. After completion of the activities, the sheets were colored and bound into a Tour of the U.S. booklet. At the end of the tours, the children had both their travel logs and this booklet.

Historical Integration

As the tours were being conducted, historical facts and information regarding the states were integrated into the study via a guest speaker, computer program, debate, research, and tradebooks.

1. Cherokee Indian heritage, guest speaker.

2. Colonial life: (tradebooks) Sarah Morton's Day; A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl; If You Lived in Colonial Times.
3. Colonization, exploring the new world--computer game. (Decisions, Decisions, by Tom Snyder Productions)
4. American Revolution: Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, George Washington (research).
5. The Alamo, visuals and research.
6. Chisholm Trail, farmers vs. ranchers (debate).
7. Lewis and Clark, Sacajawea (research).
8. Importance of corn throughout history (research).

Integration with Language Arts

The writer was mindful to preview the sequencing of material presented in the language and reading block. Several stories and activities were set within a particular state or time frame. Regions were presented in social studies so those particular states and activities could be integrated into the reading and language curriculum.

Telecommunications Unit

The school was unable to provide wiring into the classroom for a telecommunication network to be used

throughout the year; however, the library modem was made available for limited use. By using the library facility, the class was able to participate in the NGS Kids Network, a National Geographic on-line project known as "What Are We Eating?" This project began in January after the students had completed the multicultural unit and had toured the southeastern region with the historical and language/reading integration.

The NGS Kids Network project consisted of 12 schools located throughout the United States working together collaboratively to determine if students were eating well balanced meals. The project also included a study of foods that were eaten throughout the world. The students were to analyze those foods also to determine if children in other countries ate better balanced meals than the students within our country. The project lasted for six weeks.

Each school performed the same tasks and e-mailed reports of findings to each of the 11 partners and to the hub (Washington, DC office). The hub compiled, assimilated, and plotted the information in both maps and graphs. The results were then transmitted to each team member.

As the project began, the tasks assigned were as follows:

1. Each school received a team list of partners identified only by latitude and longitude. Each cooperative group used computer maps to locate each team member's location.

2. The students had to identify the exact address of their school, using degrees of latitude and longitude, and transmit it to the hub.

3. Each student was asked to interview his/her family and bring a copy of the family's favorite recipe.

4. All of the recipes were compiled into groupings determined by the students. A letter was constructed by the children to the 11 teammates throughout the U.S. The children told peers about the foods eaten. Word processing was used to construct the letter. The letter was sent electronically to all teams and the hub.

5. Some schools were from states already toured, so the children were able to write directly to these students regarding unanswered questions about those areas. Many of the students questioned each other about foods and recipes and some recipes were exchanged.

6. A list of 50 foods were given the students from which 10 were chosen. The foods chosen were tested to determine if fat, protein, and/or sugar were present. All tests were conducted in a lab setup within the classroom. Each cooperative group performed the tests on the same 10 foods. All findings were reported to both teammates and the hub.

7. One day's lunch menu was charted. The amounts of each food eaten were recorded. Using a nutrition table provided, each student calculated the amount of fat, protein, and carbohydrate found in lunches eaten. The acceptable amounts were used as a comparison to determine if the lunches analyzed were balanced or unbalanced.

8. Meals presented from other countries were also analyzed. The students discovered that most all children throughout the world eat unbalanced meals.

9. The hub graphed the data sent in and presented it back to the children in a map format.

Recipe books were made by the students as Mother's Day gifts. Each student typed in his/her favorite recipe in the computer that was used in the NGS Kids Network project. Recipes used during the multicultural unit were also included. The recipe book was divided into two categories--favorite recipes, and recipes from around the world. The children designed covers for the books which were laminated before being bound.

The students continued throughout the six weeks conversing back and forth with the students from other states. After the telecommunication network was closed, the children communicated with Vermont on a penpal basis until the end of the school year.

Communication with peers throughout the United States was an invaluable experience! The children were able to learn so much about the lives of other students through telecommunication and were amazed at the speed of communications.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The aim of this practicum was to interest and motivate students to participate in social studies. The results seen from this project were exciting as the children not only participated, but chose to use any free time available to them doing social studies. It was not unusual to see students lying in the floor with a map, travel book, atlas, or encyclopedia anytime during the day. The computer was always occupied with one or more students using it for research. Encarta was by far the most popular research tool available to the children.

A weekly log was kept of all assignments. Each country and state was checked in as it was toured; their passports were stamped; all research projects were shared and checked off; lab experiments were logged as they were completed; every project was accounted for as the children finished. The children were anxious and

proud to have their work checked in as they toured and logged the information. Missed assignments due to illness were made up. The only exception was during the NGS Kids Network project. When the labs were missed, they could not be made up. This happened to two children. Each child missed one lab. Two other children failed to complete the family tree. Otherwise, all assignments were completed.

Many children asked to take research materials home and even set up a library and librarian in the classroom to keep track of the material. All of the states' material was kept in stapled manilla folders and filed alphabetically in plastic crates. Four children consistently ran three or four states ahead of the other children touring, doing all of the optional activities and adding some of their own. If something happened during the day that would mean loss of time from social studies, the students would get very upset.

It was hoped that the report cards would reflect positively with increased participation and interest. The class as a whole has demonstrated this to be true. Only 2 of the 21 students who completed the practicum received C's. One of these students is mildly disabled and received C's for participation. One child

received one C. This student worked more slowly and was unable to tour the states individually as quickly as peers. When the writer revised the technique and began using the jig saw approach, the difficulty was resolved and the work was done more succinctly.

Table 3 gives a comparison of each child's grades in social studies from 1994 to 1995. The total number of C's and F's each student received in other content areas for the year is also shown.

Table 3

Number of C's and F's Given During the School Year

Students	C's & F's Social Studies 1994	C's & F's Social Studies 1995	C's & F's Other Subjects 1995
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	2
5	0	0	0
6	3	1	12
7	5	0	7
8	0	0	0
9	6	5	6
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	9
12	0	0	0
13	2	0	1
14	0	0	0
15	6	0	4
16	0	0	0
17	0	0	0
18	1	0	1
19	0	0	1
20	0	0	0
21	1	0	1

Ten students received either C's and/or F's in content areas other than social studies, as compared to only two students receiving C's in social studies.

To determine if the children like social studies better after the practicum than before, a social studies questionnaire, Appendix B, was given. Twenty-one of 21 students rated social studies as "great". When asked if they liked social studies better this year than last, all 21 answered unanimously "yes". When asked why, replies are as follows:

> "easier; because it's fun; because its not boring; we did a lot of fun stuff; this was more fun than reading a boring book; we got to do lots of different things; I learned a lot more about social studies this year."

The writer was interested in how the children viewed the best way of learning, so the students were asked to indicate how each learn best--writing, seeing, hearing, or reading. Table 4 indicates the results of this question.

Table 4

Students' Best Method for Learning

AB	ABC	ABCD	AD	BC	BCD	D
2	2	3	4	2	4	4

* A. Writing; B. Seeing; C. Hearing; D. Reading

When quizzed on which part of the social studies package the children liked best, their responses were as presented in Table 5:

Table 5

Students' Favorite Social Studies Teaching Techniques
N=20

Map & Globe Skills (Touring)	Research	Telecommunications NGS Kids Network
12	5	3

All but three of the students had used a computer; none had ever used telecommunications. When asked if the Kids Network should be used for the upcoming class, all stated "yes" and gave reasons for doing so. Most responses dealt with talking to other people, i.e.:

> "meet other new people; learning about others; you get to know people in other cities; and I like talking to people; because its fun and you can learn something."

The projected three outcomes were: Four out of 5 students would complete homework and class assignments each week; the number of C's and F's would be no greater in social studies than are given in any other content area during the year, and that one-half of the students would respond favorably when asked if they liked social

studies. All three of these outcomes were met.

Discussion

This project has generated quite a bit of interest among the teachers working on the 4th and 5th grade hall, the HOTS (higher order thinking) lab, and the gifted department. All of these teachers have either observed, asked for parts of the program, or the practicum itself. The school has already made plans to expand the telecommunication portion of the practicum to include all 4th grades for the upcoming year. The writer will act as a mentor to the other 4th grade teachers until they learn the program.

The techniques employed in social studies were exciting and interesting to the students who participated. Social studies became a time to look forward to rather than one of mediocre standing. Social studies with its varied activities became the "free time" activity the children wanted to do. This increased motivation and participation contributed to the escalated grades on the report cards. All year only 5 B's were given; these were given to three children. Three of the B's were given to one child who is learning disabled. The student completed the work but not at "A"

quality. The other two were given due to missed assignments that were not made up. The techniques used in this practicum produced increased academic achievement and indicates what can happen when a more active approach to social studies is employed.

Recommendations

It would be recommended to anyone who might wish to use this approach in social studies that it be discussed with the administrator in the proposed school. Should the school district require that the curriculum be taught as is the writer's circumstance, it would be suggested that the social studies guide be taken and the material be written into units as the writer did.

The multicultural and telecommunication units were not a part of the social studies curriculum, but the writer felt strongly that there is a need to help students become more globally and culturally aware. Multicultural and telecommunication units could be combined and done on-line if the facilities are present in the proposed school.

Cooperative grouping and learning is an important part of these techniques. The students need to learn how to work together, value each other's opinions and

abilities, and enjoy the commaradarie.

Dissemination

The gifted and HOTS (higher order thinking) lab have asked for copies of the practicum. The HOTS lab plans on implementing parts of the practicum the coming year. The gifted department piggy-backed on several ideas used in the practicum. A few of the activities have been shared with one 5th grade teacher. This approach is time consuming, but the results can be astounding!

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APPENDIX A

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Appendix A

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Everix, N. (1991). Ethnic Celebrations Around the World. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Specific occasions celebrated by each country are presented in easy to understand handouts along with activities.

Freedman, R. (1980). Immigrant Kids. New York: Scholastic.
Excellent pictures of Ellis Island and the processing of immigrants are presented. The book also illustrates and tells of the lives of immigrants arriving during the early 1900's.

Hamill, P. (1990, September). Reborn in America. Travel Holiday, 173,(9), 40-49; 100-101.
The magazine featured Ellis Island, past and present, along with information regarding the processing of immigrants.

Krulik, N. (N/D). The 50 States. New York: Scholastic.
Each state is presented with a hands-on activity that relates to a basic fact regarding that particular state. The pages may be duplicated.

Margolies, B. (1990). Rehema's Journey, A Visit in Tanzania. New York: Scholastic.
The diversity of lifestyle in this country is presented both through pictures and text.

Medearis, A. (1994). The Seven Days of Kwanzaa. New York: Scholastic.
The history and meaning of Kwanzaa is presented in a simplistic and meaningful way for children.

McGovern, A. (1964). If You Lived in Colonial Times. New York: Scholastic.
Everyday life is discussed. Hair styles, food, manners, school, medicines, laws, punishments, homes, work, just to name a few, are discussed.

Sledge, S. (1988). Guess What I Made: Recipes Around the World. Birmingham, AL: Newhope.

This book is an excellent source for recipes to be used in the classroom.

Snyder, T. (1986). Decisions, Decisions Colonization. Cambridge, MA: Tom Snyder Productions, Inc. The computer game allows the children to make political decisions and see the results of those decisions. A class set of booklets comes with the game to give background information prior to making each decision.

The Olympic Spirit: A Worldwide Connection (1996) Atlanta, GA: The Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG).
A biographical sketch and map of each country is presented along with the flag for the country. The sheets may be duplicated and colored by the students.

Waters, K. (1989). Sarah Morton's Day. New York: Scholastic.
This book is based on the life of a real person and presents a day in her life.

CD-ROMS

MacGlobe (1992). San Rafael, CA: Broderbund.
Maps of countries and continents are available along with data banks of information.

MacUSA (1993). San Rafael, CA: Broderbund.
Regions of the USA and states within each are presented in map format. Comparisons of most any subject are made of the states through the use of graphs.

Microsoft Encarta (1994). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation. This particular encyclopedia is both user friendly and presents the information in an easy format. Anthems and language of most countries are audible and accessible to the children.

Time Traveler CD, A Multimedia Chronicle of History! (1993). Pound Ridge NY: Multi Dimensional communications, Inc. Topics may be researched by dates. Video, sound, and animation is present along with text and visuals.

APPENDIX B

PHONE NUMBERS FOR INFORMATIONAL PACKAGES

Appendix B

PHONE NUMBERS FOR INFORMATIONAL PACKAGES

Each package contains a state map, attractions, accommodations, and points of interest.

Alabama--800-252-2262
Alaska--907-465-2010
Arizona-800-842-8257
Arkansas--800-628-8725
California--800-862-2543
Colorado--800-433-2656
Connecticut--800-282-6863
Delaware-800-441-8846
Florida--904-487-1462
Georgia--800-847-4842
Hawaii--808-923-1811
Idaho--800-635-7820
Illinois--800-223-0121
Indiana--317-232-8860
Iowa--800-345-4692
Kansas--800-252-6726
Kentucky--800-225-8747
Louisiana--800-334-8626
Maine--800-533-9595
Maryland--800-543-1036
Massachusetts--800-447-6277
Michigan--800-543-2937
Minnesota--800-657-3700
Mississippi--800-927-6378
Missouri--800-877-1234
Montana--800-541-1447
Nebraska--800-228-4307
Nevada--800-638-2328
New Hampshire--603-271-2666
New Jersey--800-537-7397
New Mexico--800-545-2040
New York--800-225-5697
North Carolina--800-847-4862
North Dakota--800-437-2077
Ohio--800-282-5393
Oklahoma--800-652-6552
Oregon--800-547-7842
Pennsylvania--800-847-4872
Rhode Island--800-556-2484
South Carolina-803-734-0122
South Dakota--605-773-3301
Tennessee--615-741-2158
Texas--800-888-8839
Vermont--802-828-3236
Virginia--800-847-4882
Washington--800-544-1800
West Virginia--800-225-5982
Wisconsin--800-432-8747
Wyoming--800-225-5996

*District of Columbia
202-789-7000